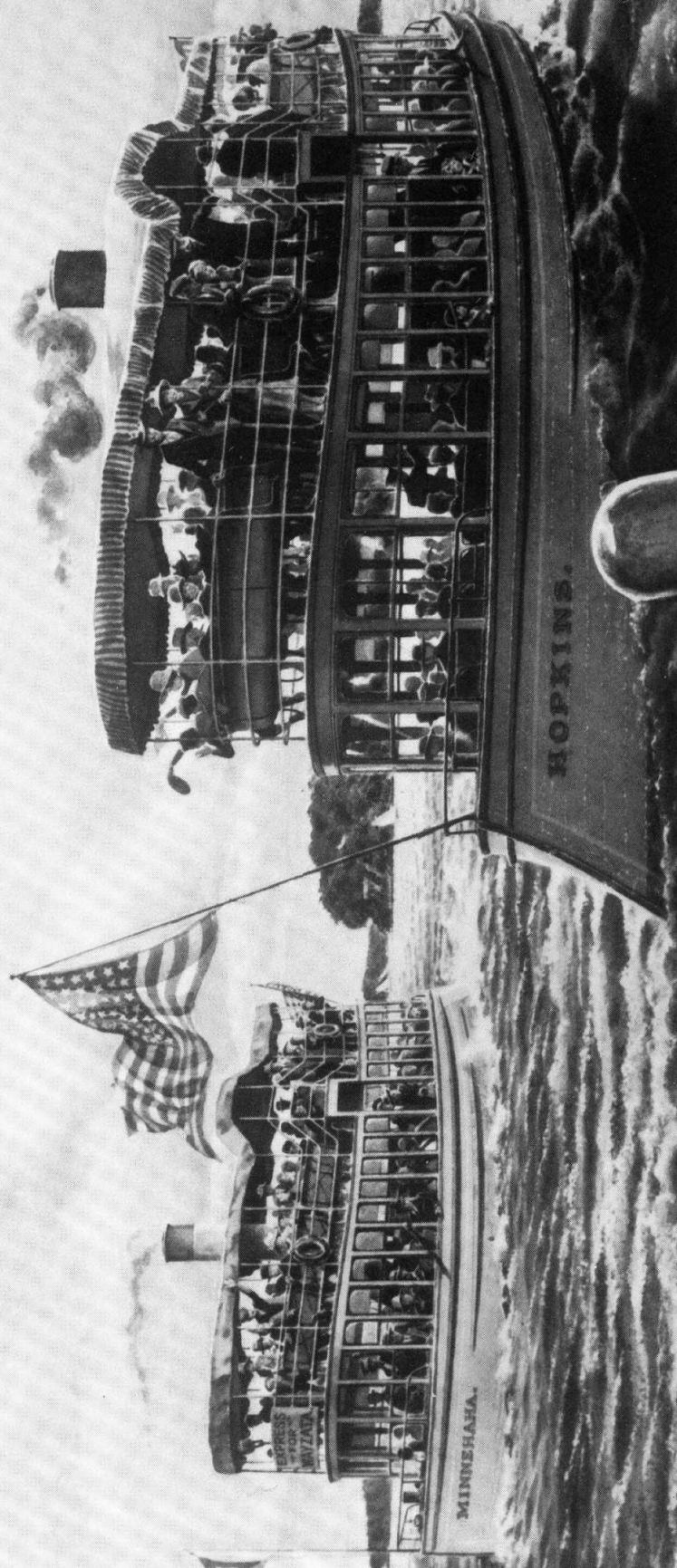


Minnesota Transportation Museum, Inc.

MINNEGAZETTE

Summer 1991





4/11/83



Official Publication of the

MINNESOTA TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM, INC.

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CIRCULATION

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SUBMISSIONS

The *MinneGAZZETTE* welcomes submissions for publication of articles, photos and other illustrative materials of historical or current interest relating to transportation in the Upper Midwest. No payment is made, and publication is at the editor's discretion.

MUSEUM PURPOSE

The Museum is a non-profit educational corporation organized in Minnesota in 1962 to acquire, preserve, restore and operate historic Minnesota transportation artifacts. It operates the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line and the Minnehaha Depot in Minneapolis, The Jackson Street Roundhouse in St. Paul, the Stillwater & St. Paul Railroad in Stillwater and the Steamboat Minnehaha restoration in Excelsior.

MEMBERSHIPS

Individual	\$ 25	Family	\$ 30
Sustaining	\$ 50	Sponsor	\$ 100

Public Information
(612) 228-0263

Member Information Line
(612) 228-9412

MUSEUM OFFICERS

Chairman	John Diers
Vice-Chairman	Art Nettis
Secretary	Aaron Isaacs
Treasurer	Louis Hoffman
Director	Tom Mega
Directors at Large	Art Pew
	Ross Hammond
	Tom Kolar

TREASURE HUNT

We'd like to hear from any member who can donate the following:

-A set of about 30 armchairs for the parlor section of car #A-11. The present ones need replacing. Perhaps you know of a hotel or office building that has recently been refurnished.

-A small tractor with a backhoe or front bucket.

-Tuneups for MTM's various trucks and forklifts.

-Paint for the Minnehaha Depot and this summer's diesel repaints.

-Ballast, railroad ties and used rail.

-Any streetcar boat hardware or furnishings.

-Tuckpointing for the Hwy. 95 bridge in Stillwater.

-A set of crossing signals for McKusick Road.

-Tarp or plastic sheeting to cover the rolling stock at the arsenal.

-A laser printer for the Editor.

-Sandblasting of railroad equipment.

-Engine oil, coolant and batteries for our diesels.

-Herbicides for Stillwater weed control.

-Track machines, especially a tie puller.

Contact the Editor if you can help.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

To the following persons who donated to the "Save Stillwater" fund: Steven Harrod, James Kalaher, Tom Lamphier, Marvin Nauman, John W. and Delores Carlson, E. J. Comfort, Dr. Douglas Beedon, William Briggs, Richard and Anita Stokes.

To the following persons who donated to the PCC Fund: Michael J. Miller, James and Marie Weist.

To the Minnesota Historical Society for their grant of \$4500 to the steamboat project and for stripping the paint off the Minnehaha Depot. MHS also gave depot restoration grants in 1990 to the Cass Gilbert Depot Society, Little Falls (\$3000), and the

Fulda Heritage Society (\$1459 for roof replacement).

To the Onan Family Foundation for their grants of \$5000 to the steamboat Minnehaha restoration and \$1200 to Como-Harriet.

To Doug Bailey for mailing labels and duplicating services.

To Kinko's Copies for mailing labels.

To Soo Line RR for donating brake parts and maintenance on diesel #105.

To 3M for donating caulk and adhesives to the Steamboat Project.

To the Metropolitan Transit Commission for permitting PCC car restoration inside its Overhaul Base.

To the Hartford Steam Boiler Co. for donating ultrasound boiler testing of #328 and #2156.

To Settergren Hardware for donating the remaining exterior paint needed to complete to Linden Hills depot.

To Smith Brothers for allowing free storage of MTM locomotives in their building.

To the following for their donations to the Steamboat Fund during 1991: D. J. Russel, Marv Boote, Elizabeth Owen, Excelsior Women's Club, Shorewood Yacht Club, Robert & Bonnie Mitchell, On Board Sailing School, Charles & Lorraine Donick, Elizabeth Ross, Rose Ann Meier, Henry Norton, Dorothy Prosch, F.E. & Lenore Churchill, Dennis G. Peterson, Minneapolis Kiwanis Southwest, Hopkins Historical Society.

To Russ Olsen, for donating his collection of TCRT destination signs.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOTICE

The next membership meeting will be at 7 PM, on Tuesday, August 6th at the Jackson Street Roundhouse.

Front Cover: This is a builder's photo of TCRT #300, the first of the 140 PCC's built by St. Louis Car Co. 1946-49. See the rear and inside rear covers for more. Andrew Maginnis collection.

Inside Front Cover: Black and white really doesn't do justice to Kurt Carlson's water color painting, "The Streetcar Boats". That's why color prints are available as a fund raiser.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

-John Diers

I'm writing this the evening of June 8. By the time it appears in print much of it will either be old news or events will have rewritten the script.

On May 25, the S&StP opened its 1991 season. We can take some comfort in this, knowing that many, myself included, were deeply concerned whether operations would start, given the very serious situation we face in Washington County. That we opened does not mean the opposition has weakened or the crisis has passed. The County has offered a very restrictive ordinance which will be heard at a public hearing June 25. Among other things, it sharply limits the number of trips and restricts our ability to do maintenance work on the line. The MTM Board, with the assistance of legal counsel, will be responding to the ordinance and taking a series of actions if it becomes law in its present, unacceptable form.

This has not been a happy experience for me personally, or for the rest of the Board. This issue is consuming vast amounts of time and resources. Other projects are being neglected. The entire Museum, its work and its long range efforts are suffering.

There is a very human inclination to feel resentment and anger at the selfishness of a few residents who place their private interest above the public good, and at county officials who seem to be serving them. But step back a moment and consider that these residents have a legitimate legal right to make their case, and the county policymakers are obligated to serve their constituents.

The County Attorney found that our operation in its present form is illegal. While we may disagree, the County Board, its staff and the Planning Advisory Commission are obligated to act on that opinion. I'm sure they feel they are helping the museum by drafting an ordinance

that will define our operation and make it legal in the eyes of the County Attorney's opinion. They have been put in a very difficult position. They may be on the wrong side of this issue, but they are not our enemies. They are simply doing their jobs. Sometime in the future this issue will be behind us, and we need to make certain that they are our friends.

On a different subject, I'm very pleased to report that the Metropolitan Transit Commission has agreed to help MTM return its PCC's to Lake Harriet. Last month the Commission approved our request for a work area at the main MTC overhaul shop. Having space in this outstanding facility will be a great help in speeding the project. Assuming funds are available, the cars will be moved there this fall. With enough volunteer help, they could be back in service for the 1994 season.

Many thanks to the MTC staff who agreed to help the project, and to MTC Chair Carole Faricy and Chief Administrator Mike Christenson who guided the request through the approval process.

If you would like to be involved in the restoration, please contact Louis Hoffman, George Isaacs or me.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MARCH 1991

-Approved the potential donation of the Jackson Street powerhouse property to MTM, provided that MTM has no obligation to clean up on-site pollution.

APRIL 1991

-Created a committee to tighten fiscal controls within the museum.

-Approved the Chairman's plan for handling the Washington County crisis.

MAY 1991

The meeting was canceled for lack of a quorum.

JUNE 1991

- Adopted tighter financial control measures.

- Voted to ask the City of St. Paul to donate locomotive #2156, which is currently leased.

- Approved a resolution of appreciation for Bill Cordes' years as the Membership Secretary.



Winching TCRT PCC #360 off its flat car at the Plank Road shops of New Jersey Public Service on August 3, 1953.

National Railway Historical Society, North Jersey Chapter collection.

TRACTION REPORT

-Louis Hoffman

Wedding Marks Season Opener.

CHSL opened its 21st season on Friday May 17th. Before the first run, traction volunteer Tim Anderson married Marsha Furlow aboard car #265. The second marriage for both, Tim says it was the bride's idea. A wedding party of about 20 rode along and the ceremony was performed just south of the Cottage City stop.



Tim Anderson and Marsha Furlow get married on the trolley.

After a rainy opening Friday—only 14 passengers rode—Saturday's weather improved. Under grey skies and in the face of a cold, strong wind, nearly 300 passengers boarded #265 and the museum's two TCRT buses as part of the Linden Hills Festival. Operations were preceded by a brief dedication of the virtually complete Linden Hills Depot.

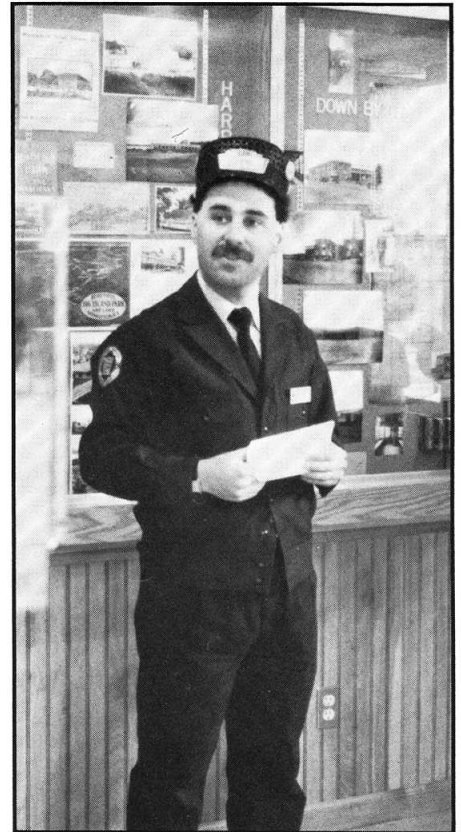
The weather Sunday was a vast improvement. More than 500 rode the buses and streetcars. Thanks to Art Nettis for coordinating the buses, to the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council and Business Association who helped pay for the insurance, and to member Dick Loeffler of MTC who again arranged for "no parking" signs along the route. Also thanks to MTC, who made repairs to the buses so they could run that weekend.

1991 Open House a Success

The third annual CHSL Open House was held on Wed., May 29. It featured the first all-Duluth two-car operation since 1939. It was #78's first public operation since 1911. 661 passengers rode, the largest Open House turnout yet. Attendance was spurred by an article on #78 on the front page of the previous day's Star-Trib Variety section, complete with a color photo.

There were a couple of bugs—#78 dewired at the frogs several times and the north end controller tended to cut out until repaired by George Isaacs. Midway through the evening, a branch fell on the overhead at the archery range. Slow orders were in effect until Roy Harvey and Karl Jones could trim it away.

Among the prominent visitors were State Senator Carol Flynn, State Representative Wes Skoglund, Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin, Minneapolis City



Louis Hoffman speaking at the dedication of the Linden Hills depot. John Prestholdt photo.

Council Member Steve Cramer, Minneapolis Park Commissioner Patricia Baker, MTC Commissioner Todd Paulson and MTC Chief Administrator Mike Christenson.

Thanks to the crews who ran a superb operation.



For the 2nd year, MTM's buses ran for the Linden Hills festival. GMC #1399 meets car #265 at the depot. John Prestholdt photo.

May Ridership Up Despite Weather

May ridership was well above the same month in 1990. A total of 5147 rode, the fourth busiest May out of 20 years and the busiest since 1981, when 6524 were carried. The record is 6617 in May 1980.

1991 Picnic to be Joint Traction-Railroad Affair

In an example of negotiation that would make a diplomat proud, the General Superintendents of Traction and Railroad, **Louis Hoffman** and **Nick Modders**, agreed to share the cost of and responsibility for this year's picnic. They also agreed to hold it at the Linden Hills car barn until suitable picnic grounds can be found along the S&StP or at Jackson Street.

The big day is Sunday, August 18 from 12:30 until 4:30PM at the car barn. The picnic is free to all members and their immediate families. Donations of cash and/or salads and desserts to share are welcome. Make your reservation by August 9th. Just return the handy coupon on the flyer enclosed with this Minnegazette.

As always, volunteers are needed to organize the picnic, flip burgers and clean up. If you can help, call **Tim Anderson** at 493-4655 or **Burt Foster** at 829-2434.



#78 rolls through the glen during operator training. John Prestholdt photo.

RAILROAD REPORT

Equipment

It's been the usual spring madness at Jackson Street, as **Steve Sandberg** and his maintenance crews made ready for the 1991 operating season. Volunteer turnout has been fairly good. Steve says that several new members have been showing up, but there is still too much reliance on the half dozen regulars, so please come out if you can.

C&NW/GN lightweight coach #1096 has had all its windows removed for resealing. While they're out would seem like a good time to sandblast and repaint the exterior, but there's a problem. As with so many steel sided cars, #1096 has some cancer and the cure was bondo, the putty used in body shops. Sandblasting would knock it all loose, leading to major sheet metal work and more expense than the budget can stand. As this is written, the plan is to reinstall the windows and do touch up painting. Eventually, however, a more thorough job will be done and the car will be repainted in its original C&NW colors.

Empire Builder coach #1213 has received new brakes. All the cars at Stillwater have been cleaned inside and out.

Bill Graham has been working on the interior of #A-11. Although it has been extensively modified over the years, it remains a wood car and some of the original interior is intact. Bill has been stripping the painted corridor and restoring the Honduran mahogany to its natural finish. He says that some of the doors and trim can be brought back. The large lounge area has plain sheet metal walls. Perhaps some original wood is underneath.



The spartan interior of bus #1399. John Prestholdt photo.

A-11 is in need of a new set of chairs. The current ones are lightly built and are coming apart. If any member knows of office or hotel chairs made surplus by a remodeling, contact Bill.

Hartford Steam Boiler Co. has donated free ultrasound testing of #328's boiler. It revealed several small areas of weakness. These can be inexpensively fixed with welding. Expect to see #328 in Stillwater by early July.

Diesel #105 received a complete brake rebuilding, courtesy of the Soo Line, who donated and partially installed a brake kit. The engine is in its best shape in years and should be the main Stillwater power this year.

#102 started the season, but has had trouble with water leaking into the engine oil. It was cured by replacing a cylinder liner.

NP 4-6-2 #2156, NP baggage car #234 and five truckloads of miscellaneous materials are now at Jackson Street. #234 was outfitted some years ago as a machine shop. In order to spot it next to the equipment building, 150 feet of inactive track was excavated from under the mud and connected to an existing spur.

Plymouth #61 has been sold to Richard and Robert Thompson of the Iron Horse Ranch near Chisago



Brakemen's training was held at Jackson Street in April. NSP #5 provided the power for the practice switch moves. Benn Coifman photo.

City. The price was \$2700 plus some steam parts, including new arch brick for #328. If this seems low, bear in mind that the Plymouth would have required trucking to move it from the Minnesota Commercial to Jackson Street, at a cost of several thousand dollars.

Only doodlebug #9735 remains at the Commercial. The plan is to fix it enough to move it to Jackson Street by fall.

In order to free up more room at Jackson Street, Dan Patch #100 and LST&T #101 are being stored next door at Smith Brothers, formerly the Great Northern's Mississippi Street coach shop. They are letting us have the space free of charge. **NO MTM MEMBERS ARE ALLOWED IN THE BUILDING WITHOUT NICK MODDERS' OR STEVE SANDBERG'S APPROVAL.** That's part of the deal.

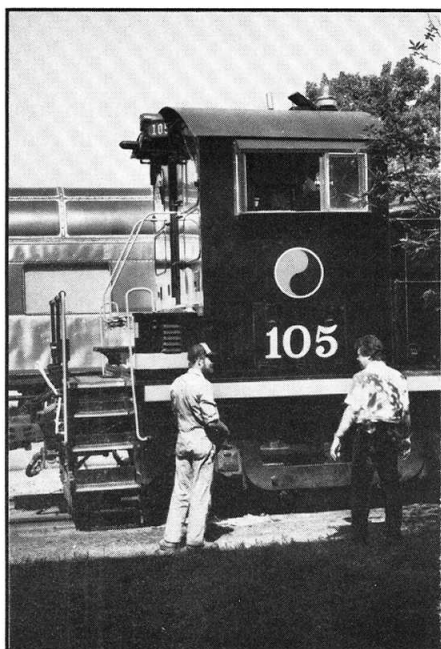
Cleaning house continues at Jackson Street. Another dumpster of scrap—this time including the old NP signal masts, has been shipped. A single car brake test stand has been sold to the Wisconsin Central for \$2250.

There are plans to repaint NSP #5 later this summer, along with the Armco Westinghouse diesel.

Alas, the hoped-for deal to lease coaches to the North Shore Scenic RR



John Stein coaches David Redding on the proper way to step on and off a moving car. Benn Coifman photo.



Keith Skeivik (left) prepares #105 for a day's service next to the Zephyr spur. Benn Coifman photo.



Dan Fortin working as a car attendant at Stillwater. Art Nettis photo.

has failed to materialize so far. They bought several ex-Boston RDC's and will haul them with a diesel. However, there remains hope for the future, especially if ridership is good.

Maintenance of Way

The scrap tie pile at Neal Ave. was cleared out this spring. Once a year the county will take them. Some old ties from the days of NP and BN lie down the embankment in the Browns Creek ravine. When conditions permit, they will be removed as well.

Railroad Specialties replaced 21 rails and 85 ties in the lower part of the Browns Creek ravine. These rails were extremely worn. It was the worst remaining track on the railroad.

The M of W crew will be installing half mile markers this year, so that engine crews can better estimate speed.

On June 13, heavy rains washed out about 5 feet of track near Stonebridge. A contractor was hired to dump rock and make the emergency repairs, which allowed the dinner train to make its scheduled run.

James Dunn works for Hennepin County as an LRT engineer. Before that he was a track engineer for the Union Pacific and Western Pacific. John Diers works on light rail for

MTC, and he arranged for Dunn to make an inspection and report on the S&StP's track. He says that the track is generally in good class 2 condition, with the exception of the bad rails and ties in the Browns Creek ravine. He also noted a section of the welded rail that has no anchor bolts. He advises a "spot" approach to track repairs—replacing individual rails and ties as needed, rather than complete rebuilding of track sections. This will make the most of MTM's limited resources.

Landscape-quality railroad ties are available at both Stillwater and Jackson Street. Call Nick Modders if you're interested.

Memorial Day Startup

For the first time in two years we ran the first weekend with our own diesel instead of Andersen Windows'. Actually the season began with school charters on May 11 and 18. The regular opening was marred by rainy weather, and ridership was low.

The train was decked out in red, white and blue for the holiday, and veterans rode free.

This year saw new postcards, a proper handout for passengers, a new employee timetable, a simplified rules test, and a revised passenger service manual. Fiscal controls have been tightened and bookkeeping has been improved. Much credit goes to General Supt. Nick Modders who put a great deal of effort into professionalizing the operation in every possible way. Thanks also to Barb Paul for her help with the books.

Washington County and Other Politics

At its June 25 public hearing, the Washington County Planning Commission voted to further reduce the number of trips allowed per day and per week. They widened the permitted track maintenance window to eight hours.

The County Board was scheduled to hear the draft ordinance on July 16.

The Minnesota Zephyr has received the permit to build its depot in Stillwater, but construction has been delayed pending a resolution of the political situation.

Elsewhere, MTM Board representatives appeared before the Stillwater City Council on June 18 to ask for a joint study of S&StP facilities in downtown. They were warmly received. We hope to work with the city staff to formalize MTM's place in the downtown plan. City staff has indicated that no train storage will be permitted south of the BN yard office where the city is purchasing the land. It is unknown whether a boarding area would be allowed. Two tracks have already been removed from the yard.

The Victorian Express Again

Preparations are starting for the second annual Victorian Express on the weekend of October 5-6. Plans are to run over the Dakota Minnesota & Eastern between Winona and Rochester. There is interest in renting steam engine #328. The next Microgazette will have more details.



This is how a cachet cover looks, reduced in size.

MAIL BY RAIL RETURNS

-Charles Eichhorn

Every time MTM's trains reached Duluth Junction last summer, dozens of passengers flocked forward to see the locomotive and to visit the RPO compartment of NP #1102. There they got a free history lesson about the days of the Railway Mail Service.

Former postal and RMS veterans Jim Weist, Lloyd Jackson and I were there to field questions, explain and demonstrate techniques of mail sorting and on the fly pouch captures. Jim and Lloyd, along with Bill Marshall, spent many hours the previous winter and spring ready-ing #1102 for display and demonstrations. #1102 ran in almost every train during 1990.

One of the most frequently asked questions by passengers was, "Why don't they send mail by train anymore?", to which the mail crew could only shake their heads. During the RMS's greatest years- the '30's to the '50's- it wasn't unusual to get mail from coast to coast in 3 1/2 to 4 days. The modern day Postal Service often is unable to equal or surpass this.

Souvenir envelopes, called cachet covers, are now part of the live mail catches each weekend. Printed on ivory stock with the design in green and blue, the cachets are sold to stamp collectors and other interested people. Passengers can have their cachet cover processed and postmarked by the RPO crew, after which they are dispatched as regular mail from the Stillwater Post Office. Stillwater Postmaster Roger Karrick and his staff give special attention to ensure that the covers make it to their final destination without further postmarking.

Cachet sales were not spectacular in 1990, but we hope to recover the startup expenses this year and return a surplus to the museum. Plans are underway to send news releases to philatelic papers and journals nationwide. Brochures will be distributed to all S&STP passengers.

The 1990 price of a cachet was \$1.50.

That will be adjusted due to the postal rate increase. If you would like one remaining from 1990, send \$1.79 to Mail-by-Rail, 13630 Paragon Ave. N., Stillwater, MN 55082.

"GRAND MARAIS" RESTORATION BEGINS

-Bill Graham

The museum's office car Grand Marais is one of our oldest, most interesting pieces. What we know about its history has been reported in previous Minnegazettes. It is thought to date from 1889. As "Grand Marais", it served the Alger, Smith Lumber Co. in Michigan and Minnesota. Rebuilt as the "Gopher", it served the Minneapolis, Northfield & Southern until retired in 1982. It is one of those rare examples of 19th century car-building that has survived virtually intact.

This project will be different from our other wooden car restorations, so often begun with abused, collapsing hulks. Grand Marais is all there, mainly in good condition, with some of its woodwork still in the original finish. A walkthrough should arouse any tinkerer's instinct. The salon is finished in lacquered Honduran mahogany worthy of a Steinway baby grand, partly buried under coats of fairly ugly enamel. It seems the car's door and window sash were stained and varnished both inside and out in a dark mahogany finish, like a proper 1880's palace car. On the outside of the rear entry door was a three-line message in gold leaf that is too obscure to read, applied directly on the varnished wood. Over this, applied onto the first coat of Pullman green, was the word "Official." (with the period, of course) again in white gold leaf.

The bedroom walls are of quarter-sawn white oak with tasteful inlay decoration, which someone chose to paint over with hideous latex enamel. The plastic padded headboard in Bedroom A came straight from the Levitz showroom, but the Adams & Westlake bed frame is the real thing. What must have been wonderfully ornate brass luggage racks and steam

pipe covers have, sadly, been taken. The ceiling light fixtures are vintage 1927 Pullman, but vestiges of the original gas or kerosene chandeliers can be found in the salon and dining room.

Work on the interior should proceed one room at a time, to avoid having the entire car torn up at once. Some veneer damage will need to be repaired, but the goal should be to restore, not replace, as much of the original woodwork as possible. It is hoped that some of the gold leaf on the ceiling can be exposed and photographed. Areas of the ceiling have come loose and need to be stuck back down. Paint should be stripped from the bedroom walls, so they can be refinished in their original dark mahogany color. The modern lavatory fixtures found throughout the car should be removed and period fixtures substituted.

A pair of four-wheel trucks that closely resemble the originals have been obtained from a Chicago & Northwestern car. These need to be disassembled, sandblasted, repaired and painted. New center plates and side bolsters need to be fashioned, and a new set of brake rigging adapted so the car can make short trips on its own wheels. New steps are needed all around.

The tar and paper roof will be removed, so that the wood underneath can be inspected and treated with preservative. A stretched canvas roof like the original should be applied, and the clerestory windows exposed so daylight can enter once again. No decision has been made on removing the 1927 steel sheathing to expose the original wainscoat exterior. That would reveal the details of the original color scheme, insignia and decoration. It would also open the forward vestibule, making observation platforms at both ends as when the car was delivered from Barney & Smith.

Any member interested in working on this project should contact Bill Graham at (715) 748-2497, Steve Sandberg at 688-7282 or Dick Fish at 729-8068. Regular work sessions will be held Wednesday

evenings and Saturdays at Jackson Street. Fancy skills and tools are not needed. There are take-home projects for those who would rather work at their own benches. Some custom millwork will be needed, although **Bob Dumas** already has made a good supply of bead molding for window projects. For the mechanically oriented, we have trucks, draft gear, brake rigging and electrical wiring to do.

MTM has built a sound reputation for high quality restorations. The Grand Marais is a rare chance for anyone interested in palace cars of the gilded age.

STEAMBOAT REPORT

Grants and Donations

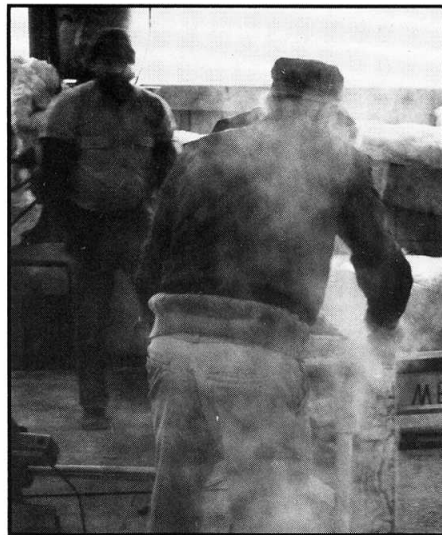
Artist **Kurt Carlson** is donating a large share of the royalties from prints of his painting "The Streetcar Boats" (see the inside front cover) to the Steamboat Project. Members may purchase a signed artist's proof for \$100. As of this writing, over half have been sold.

Other fund raising efforts are doing well. The Minnesota Historical Society grant of \$4500 is the largest one it gave this year. The **Onan Family Foundation** has just given a grant of \$5000. **David Onan** lives on the lake and is a marine enthusiast.

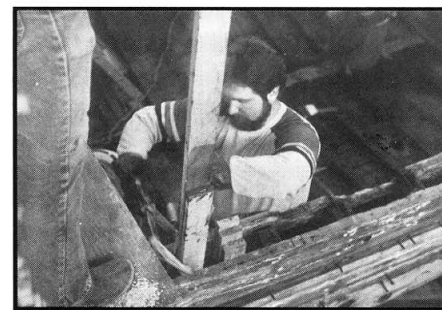
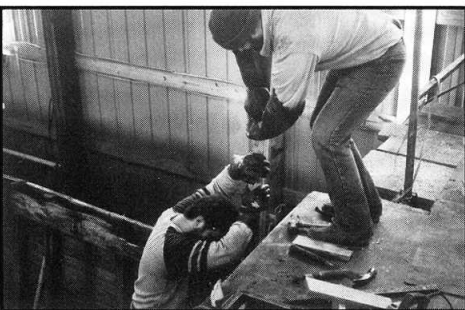
Last winter's order of steamboat T-shirts and sweatshirts sold out quickly. They have been reordered, along with more reprints of the Big Island Park brochure and a TCRT streetcar boat schedule. To buy any of these, visit the CHSL Linden Hills depot, visit the boat building on a Saturday morning or call **Leo Meloche** at 470-1770.

As people find out about the Minnehaha restoration, streetcar boat artifacts have materialized from all directions. The last Minne-gazette told the story of the recently donated ship's wheel. Here are the other treasures that have surfaced.

-A streetcar boat anchor, in perfect condition, from **Henry Arendt**.



This is how to install a new rib in the steamboat hull. After softening in the steambox, the timber is removed, painted with adhesive, and pounded into place, where it bends to the curve of the hull. All this must happen within three minutes, or the wood will lose its flexibility. Above Left: Stan Straley pulls a fresh one from the steam box. Above Right: Bob Dumas is applying the glue to the steaming timber. Below: Straley and professional boatwright Paul Kotoski shove and pound the new rib home. Aaron Isaacs photos.



-A searchlight, in good condition, from **Louis Tilton**.

-18 lower deck seats, from **Darel Liepold**.

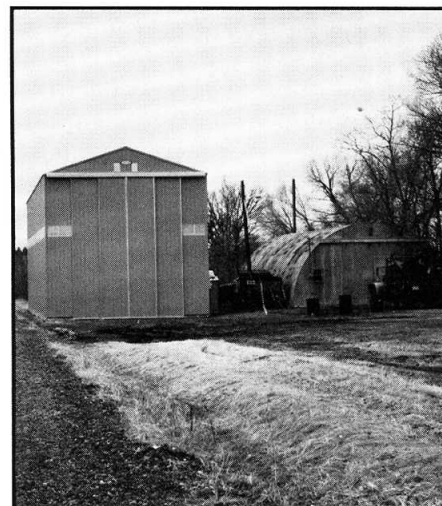
-A flag staff and funnel, from **Bill Niccum**.

-A flag pole base and miscellaneous railings, from **Steve Force**.

In addition, MTM already had two colored running lamps and two upper deck benches. **Capt. Carr Griffith** has donated lubricators and gauges, although they are not from a streetcar boat.

The boat building has been improved with a burglar alarm and a new set of storage scaffolding in one corner.

The fabrication and insertion of new ribs will continue for most of this year. Over 20 have been installed to date, with about 100 left to go. The crew can do about four per weekend, so it's a long-term job. Already the new ribs have removed much of the hull's sag.



The boat building sits astride the former Minneapolis & St. Louis right of way now owned by Hennepin County. The quonset hut at right sits on the old TCRT right of way which is presently for sale. Aaron Isaacs photo.

New Engine Acquired

The last Minnegazette recounted the donation and delivery of a 1903-vintage Swedish steam engine from the collection of the late David Rose. It has been disassembled for cleaning. The original intent was to install it in the Minnehaha, even though it would leave the boat underpowered. All the while, however, there has been another engine waiting in the wings. Owned by Chadwell O'Connor of Costa Mesa, CA, it is one of three built for the U.S. Navy in 1944 but never installed. Essentially it is a 47-year old brand new engine. After months of discussing price, Leo Meloche traveled to California in June and handed O'Connor a check for \$5000.

Like the Minnehaha's original engine, it is triple expansion, meaning it has three cylinders. It is rated at 127 hp, about the same as the Minnehaha, which could cruise at 14 knots. It measures 80 inches by 36 inches and stands 6 1/2 feet tall, about two feet taller than the Rose engine.

O'Connor is an interesting figure in his own right. He owns his own company, which builds all the steam locomotives and steamboats for Disney World. He deals in boilers and will help MTM find a suitable one.

A SECTION FOREMAN REMEMBERS

- Floyd Almjeld

Editors note: Mr. Almjeld hired out as a section laborer with the Chicago & Northwestern in 1925. He retired as a foreman in 1968. His recollections were compiled with the help of his daughter, Karen Kurle, and he has generously shared them with the Minnegazette. He lives in Wabasso.

Starting Out

I started working as a section laborer at Burchard, MN, a flag stop between Tyler and Balaton. My older brother Clifford was also working there. Our home farm was



Floyd Almjeld spent the last 31 years of his career tending the Evan-Marshall line. It ran straight across the open prairie. This view from atop an elevator at Milroy circa 1910 typifies it. Minnesota Historical Society collection.

about two miles west of Burchard, so we walked to work. At this time our salary was 37 cents per hour.

During my first few years as a laborer, work was seasonal and I was laid off during the winter months. There was no unemployment, so one was always looking for work to earn a little money.

On two occasions when I was bumped, that is, a man with more

seniority took my place during the winter, I took over the coal house duties and shoveled coal from gondolas into pockets or chutes in the coal house. There was a separate track along the main line, where trains could fill their tenders with coal. It was built on an inclined trestle, rising to a height of 16 or 18 feet. A house-like enclosure was built to hold two gondolas of coal.



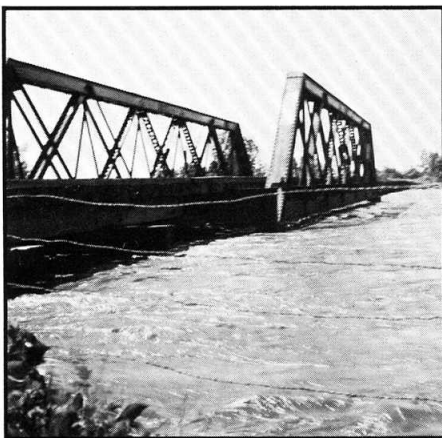
Snowbound a mile west of Rowena on Feb. 25, 1953. Floyd Almjeld photo.



Wabasso on the C&NW in 1940. Floyd Almjdeld photo.

The ends were open, but they could be closed by means of canvas suspended above on a roller. A train would stop and empty coal from the chute to the tender. There were ten chutes and each held four tons.

In 1930 I was transferred to Tyler, as I had enough seniority to work most of the time, especially during the winter. My salary had gone up to 41 cents per hour and I held the position of first man on the crew. This was during the build up of the drought, dust storms and the depression. Our track circled the south end of Lake Benton, and as it dried up, we watched the seeding, growth and harvesting of a rye crop on the lake bottom.



The Redwood River is trying to remove this bridge near Seaforth in the summer of 1957. Floyd Almjdeld photo.

Duties of Section Men

The main duty of the section men was the maintenance of the track. In the spring the first job was to check the ties and replace those that were broken, rotten or damaged. On the average we would replace over 100 ties per mile of track each year.

After this we would surface the track, placing a jack under the rail and lifting it to the desired height, then tamping gravel under the ties. At this time we had four daily passenger trains and the speed of those trains made it necessary to raise up spots that were only 1/4 inch low.

At times it was necessary to cut a rail. If it was only a few inches or a foot, we would saw through with a common hacksaw, but this was time consuming. If the piece to be cut were longer, we would chisel mark and snap it off.

To do this we would chisel mark the base of the rail at the point to be cut and securely spike down the short end. If there was enough manpower, we would pry the long end to create pressure. Otherwise we used our track jack to get pressure. Then we would place the chisel at the mark and a sharp blow with a maul on the chisel would usually create a clean break.

In 1936 we had a large extra gang, or steel gang, from Chicago move into Tyler to replace the 72 pound rail with 90 pound from Balaton to Lake Benton. The total manpower was about 100, including the machine operators. The

men were transported on 8-10 trailers pulled behind a large motor car.

Even in those days there was power equipment for different jobs, such as adzing machines, bolting machines, spike pullers and different kinds of cranes for handling rail. Replacing rail involves replacing practically everything—ties plates, switches, frogs and thicker planks at highway bridges.

Another duty was weed control, all of which was done manually. Keeping the track clean of weeds was done with a straight or push-type hoe; this included the spare 24 inches beyond the ends of the ties as well as between the rails. The weeds and grass beyond this was cut with a scythe a distance of 36 inches.

About 1930 they came out with a scalding machine to kill the weeds. It was a flat car with a movable deck built below, that could be raised and lowered by air for crossing switches and bridges. This deck had canvas on the sides and ends to hold the steam in. The steam for the scalding was provided by the locomotive. The unit moved at slow speed.

In winter most of our time was spent removing snow and ice from grade crossings and keeping the switches clean.

A Winter Adventure

The railway policy was, "If you can't inspect the track by motor car, you must walk it".

One very cold morning, during a bad blizzard, I started my walk to Lake Benton, the west end of our section, a distance of about eight miles. The conditions were such that I rarely saw the rail, and I had to walk over many deep snowdrifts.

I arrived at Lake Benton cold and tired. As I entered the depot, the agent told me that all trains had been canceled. I had intended to take the noon passenger train back to Tyler. I called the foreman at Tyler and told him I would not be walking back, and that I would be staying at the hotel overnight.

In the evening I knew the agent would be at the depot, so I walked down there and was handed a message from the roadmaster. They were running the midnight passenger train and I was to ride the head locomotive back to Tyler so I could show the crew where the deepest drifts were.

Snowplows were prohibited on passengers trains, so they had two freight locomotives, the larger Z type. We plowed through new drifts that were as high as the locomotive. When we arrived at Tyler, I met the roadmaster and he said, "Be on hand at 6 AM because we have a train stuck in a drift somewhere between here and Arco."

This was on the branch line from Tyler to Astoria, SD, serving the towns of Arco, Ivanhoe and Hendricks. The stuck train was a mixed. It had a passenger coach and also carried express. On board was one lady passenger and four laborers sent along to clean the switches of snow.



Where there's a cut, there will be drifts. The crew extricates an Alco in March 1965. Floyd Almjeld photo.

That morning a locomotive and snowplow left Tyler but we were unable to plow through the compacted drifts with the equipment we had. We dug ourselves out and cancelled the rescue until the following day when we would try again with bigger equipment.

We hired a farmer with a team of horses and a bobsled to haul a load of coal to the stuck train to keep the locomotive alive. We unloaded the coal a short distance from the engine and carried it over in pails. The farmer took the passenger and the crew back to Tyler and I stayed with the laborers to keep the locomotive fired up.

We spent most of the time shoveling snow into the water tank of the tender.

At first this was simple because we were in a big drift, but by the second day we had to carry the snow.

In the baggage compartment of the combine there was a quarter of beef and a box of bread shipped by a bakery. We grilled the beef in the locomotive fire box. That was our menu the night and day I was there.

The next day they came out with two large freight locomotives and a plow and brought us back to town. Several days later the company sent up equipment to open the line. The drifts were filled with a mixture of dirt and snow packed in very hard. The towns along the line had nearly exhausted their supplies of coal, fuel oil and groceries.

My foreman was sick at the time, so I was instructed to line up 21 laborers the following morning to go with the rotary plow train. There were two crews of train and snow plow operators. They would work eight hours on, then have eight hours off. The roadmaster was also aboard. Next to the locomotive was our coach, where we would ride between drifts. Behind the coach was a gondola of coal, which we would fill when we were at a station.

This trip was continuous duty for us laborers. We left at 4:30 Thurs-



This is what happens when you hit a drift a little too hard. Floyd Almjeld photo.



So after the plow breaks through, you get to clean the flangeways by hand, like on this Feb. 1946 day. Makes one long to go railroading. Floyd Almjd photo.

day morning and reached Ivanhoe by late Friday afternoon. We had a good meal there and worked all Friday night. By 9 AM on Saturday we were still three miles out of Hendricks. The roadmaster had sent a message into town with some spectator that we would walk in for breakfast and to arrange for our crew to eat there.

We had a little better going after that. We were in Astoria for supper on Saturday. After turning the rotary and locomotive on the turntable, we started back to Tyler, arriving there at 12:30 AM. When we arrived, we saw a long freight waiting on the west leg of the wye, ready to take fuel, coal and groceries to the towns on that line. When we cleared the switch, they pulled out.

I checked for mail and messages at the depot, and there was one from the dispatcher: "Be on hand at 6:30 AM Sunday to operate the flanger." I did report at 6:30, but we had had another bad blizzard and all trains were cancelled. The 21 laborers and I had been on continuous duty since 4:30 AM on Thursday.

A Close Call

One day Bill Neiman, my foreman, and I had a close call with a locomotive. After getting our train lineup from the dispatcher, we left for Lake Benton on our motor car to

inspect the track. On our return, on a grade by the shore of the lake, we saw a locomotive backing around the curve. It was not on our train lineup.

This was a day commonly called Stock Day. The branch line train, on returning from Astoria each Wednesday, would pick up 8-10 cars of livestock at Tyler. This was one of the more active shipping associations in the area, and on this day the train would continue on to Tracy. The locomotive was backing up to meet a loaded livestock train at Lake Benton.

On sighting the locomotive, I stopped the motor car and Mr. Neiman ran to flag them. On a Fairmont motor car there is no reverse gear, so one has to stop the engine, and by moving the timer lever, start the engine the opposite way.

As the locomotive approached Mr. Neiman, he threw a stone at the cab window to attract the attention of the crew, but they were not watching. After getting the engine reversed, I could not pick up speed fast enough. I was about to leap, when they finally noticed another stone on the window and managed to stop a short distance from me.

A Promotion

In 1937 I was promoted to section foreman and my first assignment was in Faulkton, SD. During the previous two years I had had a number of temporary foreman jobs, relieving men for sickness and vacation.

In August 1937 a position opened up in Wabasso. This was quite a change from the time I had spent in Tyler, with the passenger trains and faster freights.

Here our sections were much longer, and it was not possible to keep up the tracks due to the new larger boxcars. They were about double the tonnage of the old ones. During periods of boxcar shortages, the cars were overloaded, doing considerable damage to track beds. When this track had been laid out, the earth was leveled off and ties and light 60 pound rail were placed directly on the dirt.

Another concern in this light rail area was the breakage of joint bars and bolts, due to contraction of the rails during extremely cold periods. Likewise, extremely hot weather caused expansion of the rails. These were called sun kinks and caused a lot of derailments. When we would come to a sun kink, our remedy was to saw off a few inches of the replacement rail with a hacksaw to fit the space.

In 1967 the company started a rebuilding program. I had an extra gang of about 30 laborers working most of the summer. We installed over 10,000 ties and resurfaced some spots with gravel. They did not continue this program the following year.

Stay Alert, Stay Alive, Safety First

In the track or maintenance department, safety was the rule of the day. Periodic safety meetings were held, with films of the type of work we did and how injuries happened when this work was done in an unsafe way. We were issued a book of rules governing maintenance of way and structures, plus a book on general regulations and safety rules.

In order for a section laborer to be promoted to foreman, he must first pass an examination on the contents of these books. He would also take an examination to become a track car operator. If he passed, an operator's permit would be issued.

As most of our work was with heavy materials, we were asked by the company to wear steel toe

shoes. Some of the employees did not like to wear them. They felt the shoes were uncomfortable. I did not have that problem and wore them all the time.

When our work involved cutting or chiseling rails or track bolts, it was necessary to wear shatter-proof goggles. Chiseling was a two-man job; one to swing the heavy maul and the other to hold a large chisel with a handle attached to it.

There were demerit marks issued for accidents and awards for the least number of accidents in your division. Our Dakota Division won the safety award for the year in 1955. We were taken to Huron, SD by a special train, which started in Winona and picked up employees and their spouses on its way. It was a 12-coach train and it was filled when it arrived at Huron.

After arriving we were escorted to the auditorium, followed by the usual speeches and a well organized banquet. After the dinner, the floor was cleared and a band was set up for dancing. It was early the next morning when we arrived home.

Motor Cars

Most of the motor cars were made by the Fairmont Mfg. Co. in Fairmont, MN. The type used by section crews is the eight horsepower, two-cycle, belt driven model. The motor has ample power to pull a load of ties or rails on a push car or trailer. The motor runs in both directions, activated by the position of the timer-lever. It is cooled by a water jacket that holds about four gallons of water. Four dry cell batteries and a coil are used in the ignition system. There were no lights.

In 1965 the railroad replaced some of the motor cars with Ford 1/2 ton pickup trucks with rail guide wheels. I was fortunate to get one, as I had 52 miles of track which extended from Marshall Junction to Clements, plus the Vesta line.

High Wind

One evening in the early 1960's, an empty boxcar was blown out of the Wabasso yard during a severe wind and rain storm. It had been

spotted at the Farm Bureau plant and the brakes were set. The men who were loading fertilizer from it had to move the car. They released the brakes and did not set them again, and they forgot to close the main door when the car was empty.

The storm came in from the west-northwest. Since the door was open to catch the wind, the car started rolling. It blew through the main line switch, bending the points.

As this was after working hours, I called my helper and we repaired the switch and left a message for the train crew to be on the lookout for both us and the boxcar. We set off on our motor car, not knowing if the boxcar had been involved in an accident or derailed. We were told by people in Clements that it had passed through there at a high rate of speed.

We finally found it 18 miles from Wabasso. It had come to a stop on a slight upgrade one mile west of Evan.

Hobo Camp

Hobos were in most towns during the depression and later years. Most of them were men who were looking for work; many followed the harvest season from the south to the north.

The "Hobo Camp" in Wabasso was located where the present Farmer's Livestock yard is now. Before it was built, there was a sort of pit in the hillside which offered shelter from the wind. Here the transients would cook their stew and do their laundry, as water was available at the water tower close by. The tower was filled by a windmill.

The hobos traveled on freight trains, on top or in the boxcars. It was a common practice in the rural areas for them to ask for a handout, offering to do odd jobs of some sort. In larger cities some churches would have places set up to feed them. There were many good men among them, good workers who sometimes stayed on in the community.

Labor and Management

When I first started working for the railroad, our motor cars were not protected by a windshield. This was especially difficult during the winter months when we had no protection

from the elements. In the early 1930's our union negotiated to install a glass windshield, with the lower portion protected by a framed canvas. This settled a disagreement that had lasted for several years.

Another issue was that we were not allowed to motor into the station to eat our lunch in cold weather until the roadmaster gave us definite instructions that it would be allowed. Many times we sat in the shelter of a snow fence, built a fire to thaw out our frozen sandwiches and ate there.

Presidential Special

While I was working on the section at Burchard, we had a special train come through carrying President Calvin Coolidge. It was scheduled to travel from Chicago to Rapid City, then on to the Black Hills.

In advance of the train, many safety precautions were taken. We made a thorough track inspection that morning and men were stationed at heavy traffic highways and at long bridges to prevent sabotage. I was stationed on one of the bridges. Half an hour before the special arrived, a pilot train, consisting of a locomotive and caboose, steamed through.

FOUND— STREETCAR BOAT COUSIN

Consider this—a 2/3 size copy of a streetcar boat still exists, fully intact and operational. One of two almost identical boats built in 1909 by Moore Boat Works of Wayzata, it was designed by Roy Moore, the same man who designed the TCRT boats. There is a picture of its sister boat on page 143 of the Thomas Lowry biography "Streetcar Man".

Originally named the Harriet, it was built for Thomas B. Walker, of Walker Art Center fame. Unlike the streetcar boats, it was built with a gas engine. It started its life on Lake Minnetonka and later was moved to the St. Croix River. It stayed in the Walker family until 1934, when it was sold to George Cadden of St. Paul.

The next owner, Jack Butherus, bought it in 1951 and it has been on the St. Croix ever since. Despite its age, much of the boat is original and the changes made over the years have been minor. The superstructure is Honduran mahogany, and the hull is cypress with bent oak frames, just like a streetcar boat. The resemblance extends to the cabin ceiling beams, the interior paneling and the drop sash windows. Like the Minnehaha, there is a torpedo stern. It has a four cylinder, 40 hp. Red Wing motor.

The boat was renamed the JID for Jack, his wife Ila and his daughter Donna. Jack has been having health problems, so the JID was put up for sale. It was recently purchased by an as-yet unnamed party in the Lake Minnetonka area.

TRACY DEPOT CLOSES

The Fall 1990 Minnegazette reported that the depot in Tracy would soon close. It actually happened in December, and with it ended the 46 year career of station agent Charlie Schwartz. 36 of those years were spent at Tracy.

When he started there in 1954 Tracy was a division point. There were 15-20 employees on duty in the depot and division offices around the clock, seven days a week. The telegraph was still used and the Dakota "400" provided passenger service. Six daily freights came through. The branch to Marshall and Canby was still in service. The roundhouse and car shops were active. There was an ice house for the refrigerator cars and stockyards for loading cattle. Five-man crews were the norm and steam had not yet succumbed.

The line went through a 30-year decline until it was sold in 1986 to the Dakota Minnesota & Eastern. The new owner has upgraded the track and service has rebounded from thrice weekly to daily in each direction. The DM&E is a lean operation, as all modern railroads must be to survive. Two-man crews are the norm. So now there are no



The front of JID's cabin. The wheel is not original. Note the streetcar-like drop sash windows and wood paneling. Aaron Isaacs photo.

open depots between Waseca and Huron, and only five full time employees are left in Tracy.

Based on a story in the Dec. 26, 1990 Tracy Headlight-Herald.

OBITUARIES

Ezra B. "Ben" Curry died May 18, 1991 at age 94. Ben was a long time MTM member and financial supporter. He also contributed photos and artifacts from his collection. He inherited his interest in railroading from his father, who was chief mechanical officer for the Northern Pacific. A mechanical engineer, he once worked for the Milwaukee Road and Northwest Airlines. He later

bought and ran a resort on Gull Lake. He was very active in the National Railroad Museum in Green Bay and was named an honorary director. Ben moved to Florida in 1983, but returned to Minnesota often and never lost touch with MTM.

Marcella Gilkerson passed away on June 1, 1991, at age 70. Marcella was a family member with her husband, Wendell. During the years Wendell was MTM Treasurer, Marcella put in many hours helping him to pay the bills and do the endless paperwork that the job required. She was the mother of member Ward Gilkerson.



The JID in storage at Riverside Yacht Service in Hudson, WI. Aaron Isaacs photo.

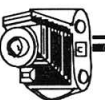


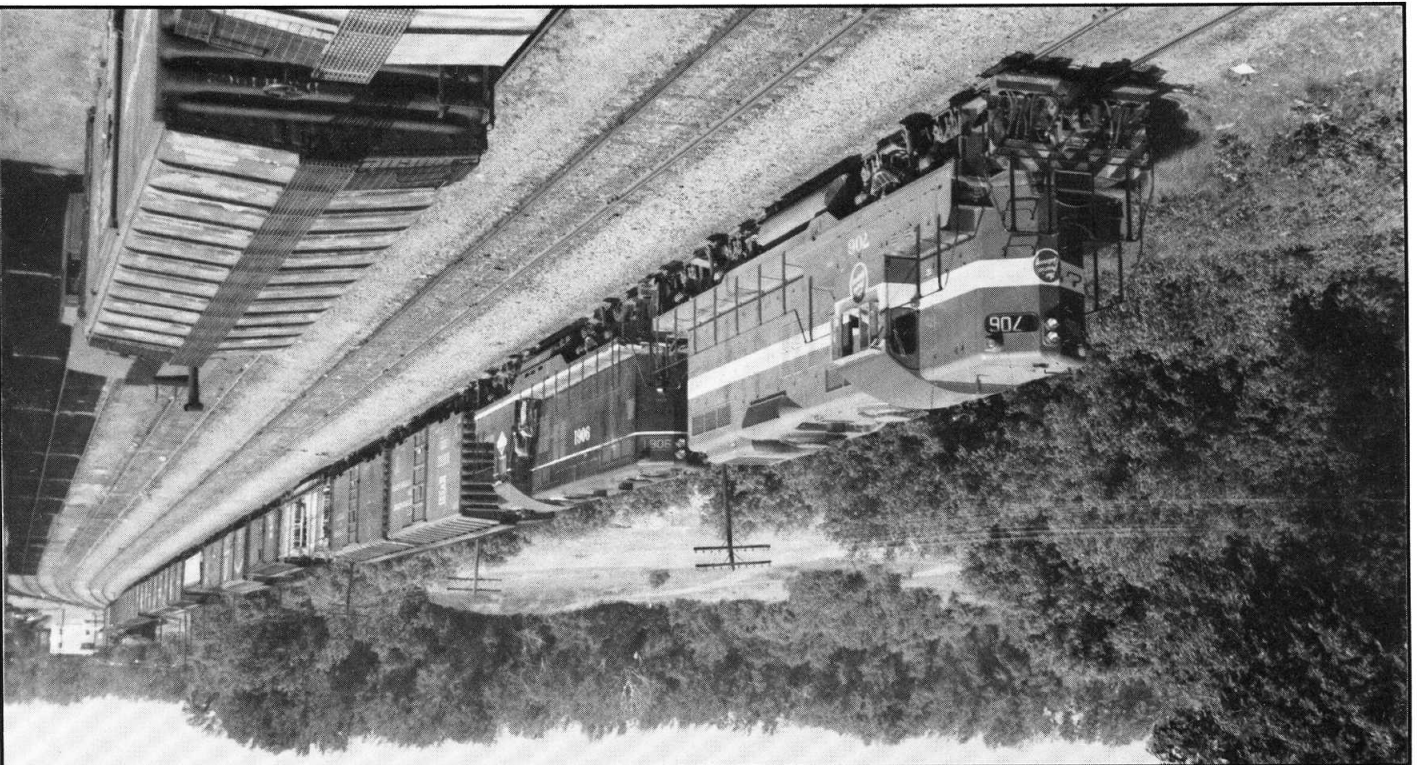
Photo Section

MINNEGAPOLIS

FROM THE COLLECTION OF

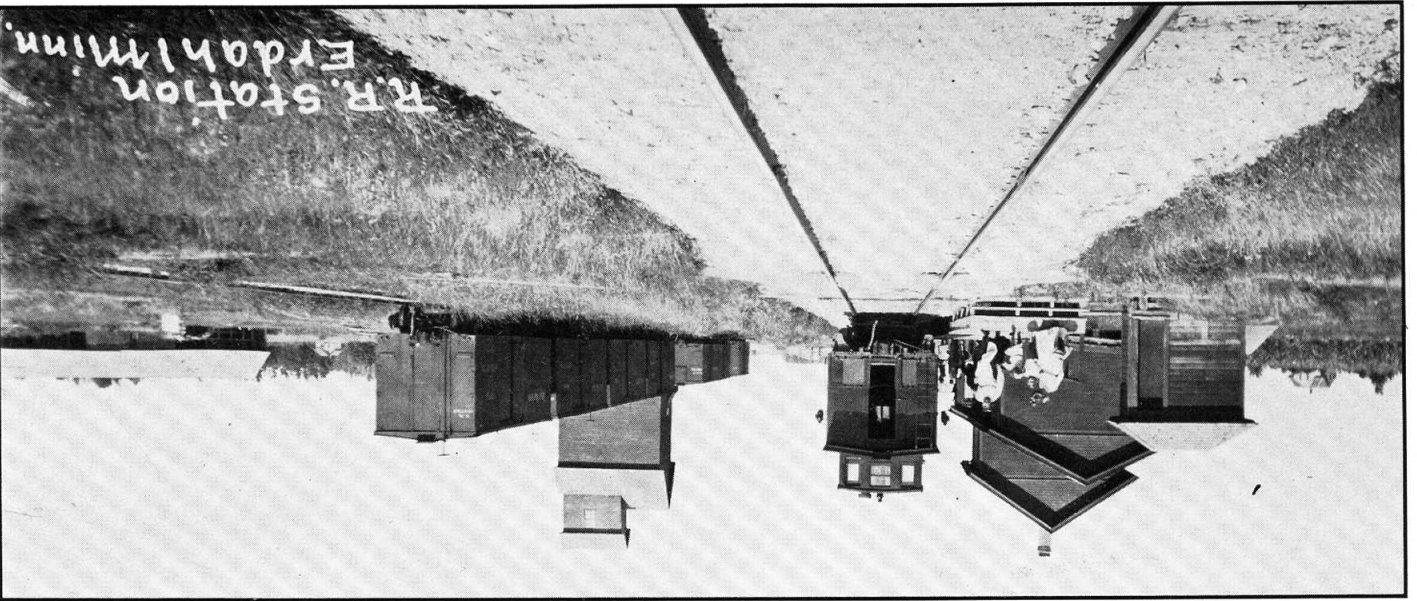
PETE BONESTEEL

Pete Bonesteel has spent decades travelling the upper midwest as a salesman. Along the way he buys every railroad postcard he can find. The result is one of the largest photo collections in Minnesota. Pete has graciously given the Minnegazette permission to reproduce them, so this issue's entire Photo Section is just a sample of what he has in his basement.



Above: A Minneapolis & St. Louis freight departs Cedar Lake yard in Minneapolis in June 1960. The Illinois Central geep is probably part of a run-through arrangement via Albert Lea. Max Miller photo.

Below: A family detains from the daily mixed at Erdahl, on the GN's Evansville - Elbow Lake branch.





Above: The streetcar boat Stillwater rides low in the water as it loads and unloads passengers at an unknown location.

Below: Sometime around 1930, the Northern Pacific's branch line local to Oakes, SD prepares to leave the Twin Cities-Fargo main line at Wadena.



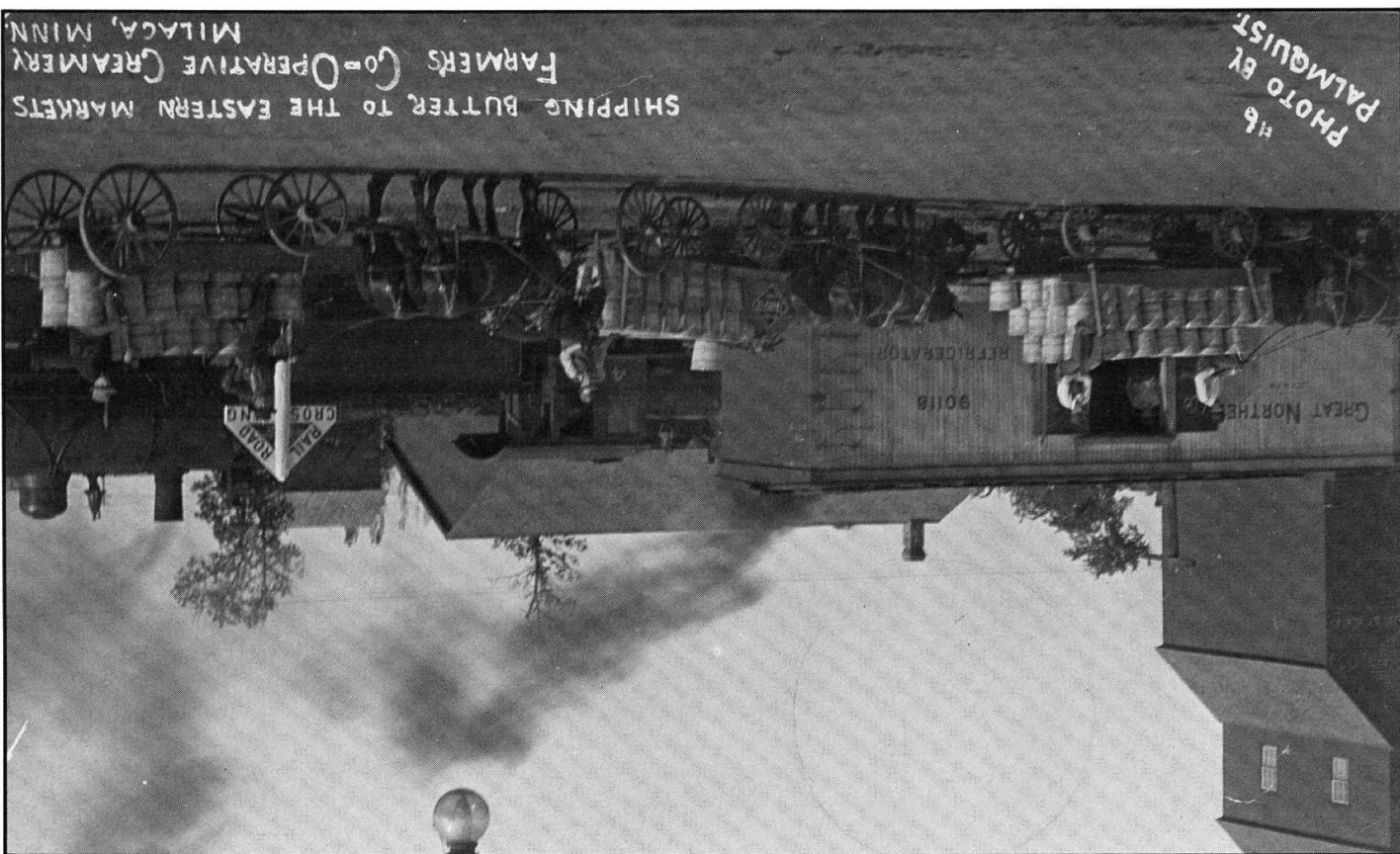
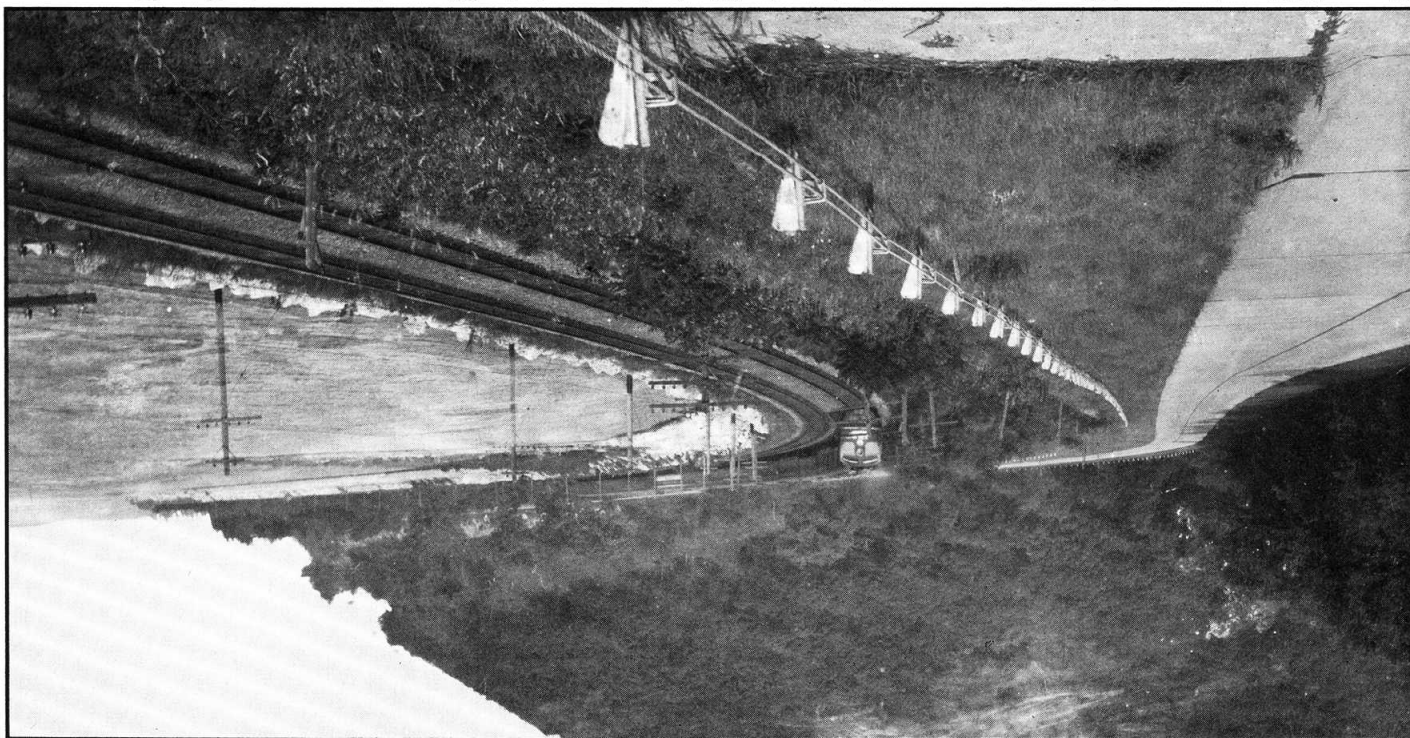
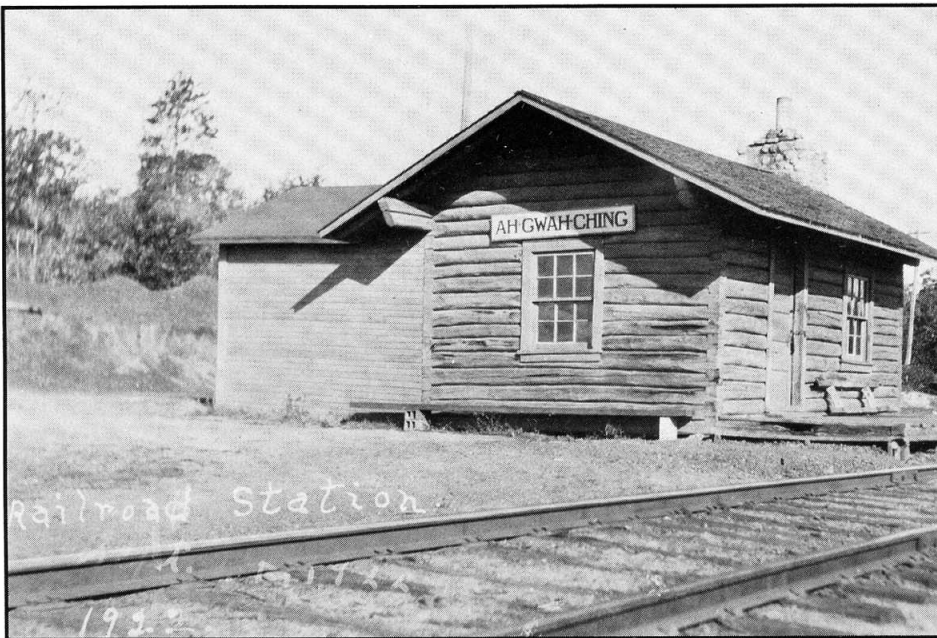


PHOTO BY
PALMQUIST
46

Above: A Milwaukee Road Hiawatha races south along the Mississippi near Lake City, next to an empty Hwy. 61.
Below: In the prairie states, the railroad builders' goal was a station within a one-day wagon round trip of every farmer. Such close spacing later proved the undoing of most of the branch line network. In this 1914 view, butter is being loaded onto the Great Northern at Milaca.





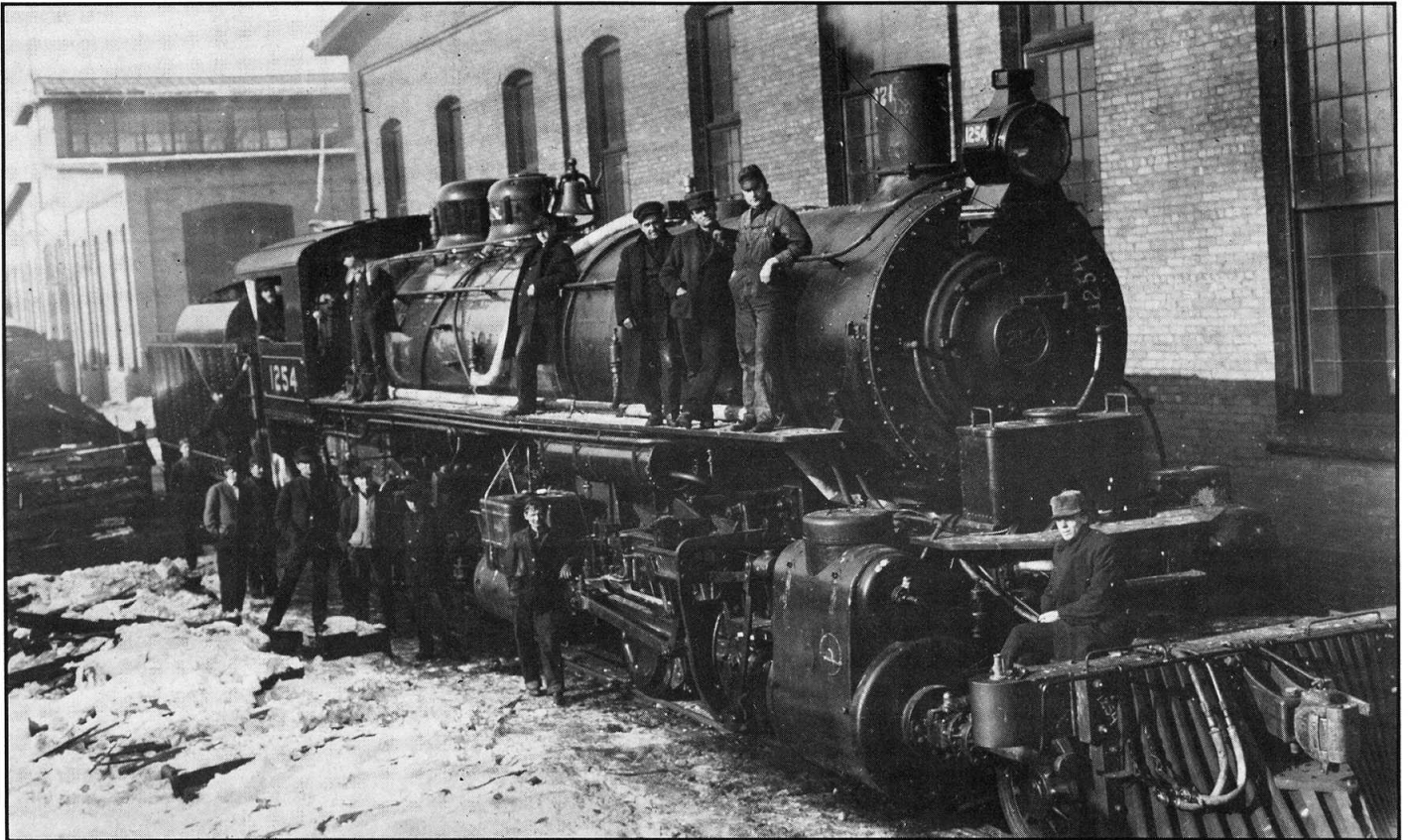
Left: OBSCURE DEPOTS ON PARADE- In keeping with its rustic surroundings, the depot for the Ah-gwah-ching resort on Leech Lake near Walker was built of logs.

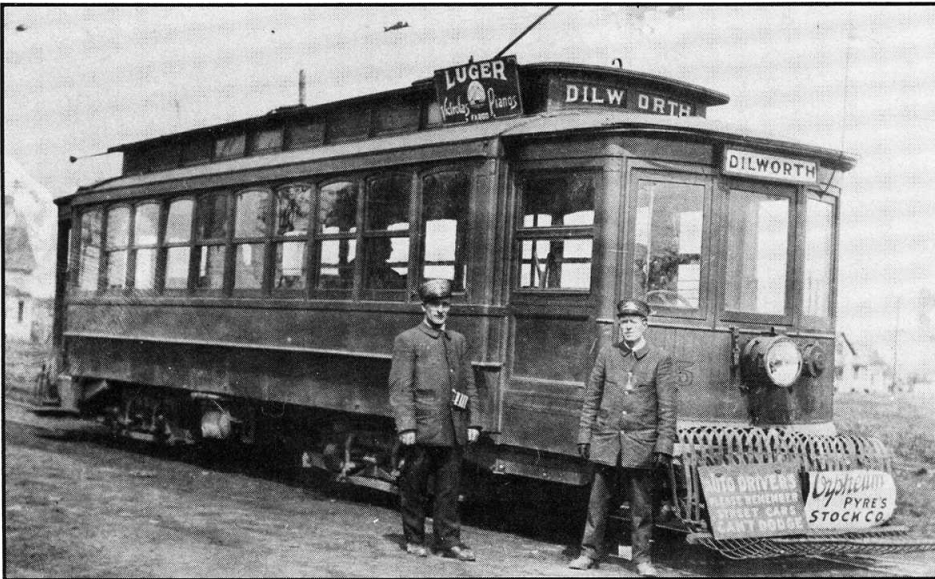
Opposite Page Top: As Wallace Abbey noted in his Soo Line book, *The Little Jewel*, the real reason for owning locomotives is to have your picture taken on them. Here is a good example. It is 1905 and this new Great Northern mallet has just been delivered to Dale Street Shops.

Opposite Page Bottom: The local calls at Clearwater on the Great Northern just south of St. Cloud.

Below: This picture captures the golden years of steam and varnish. The Oriental Limited clears Sauk Centre with an all wood consist, sometime around 1910.







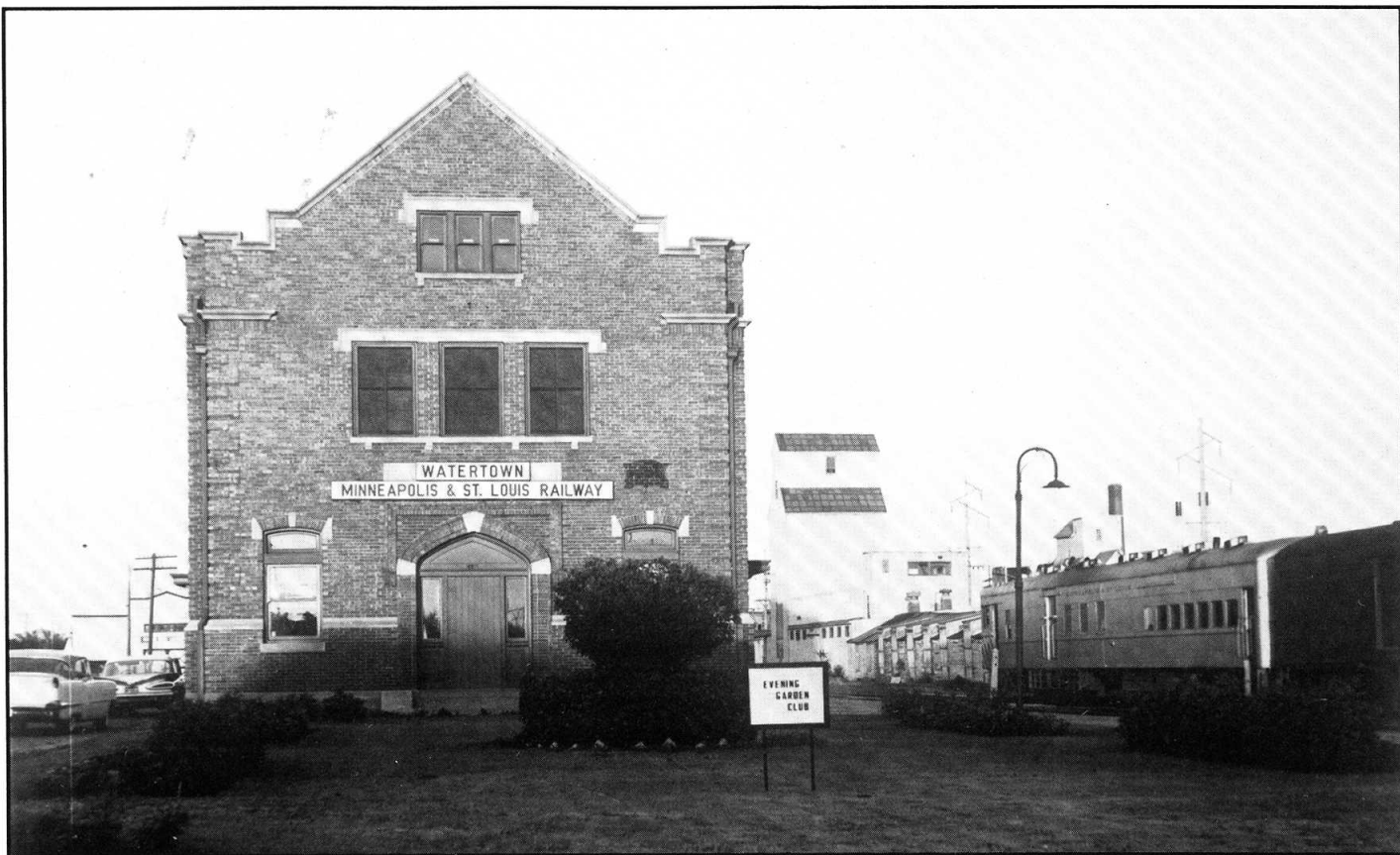
Left: In 1912 the Fargo & Moorhead Street Railway Co. built through open country to reach the Northern Pacific shops at Dilworth. Car #15, bought second hand from Philadelphia Rapid Transit, is waiting to return to Fargo on May 10, 1919. Signs advertise Luger Victrola Pianos and an appearance at the Orpheum Theatre by Pyre's Stock Co., and admonish auto drivers, "Please remember street cars can't dodge".

Opposite Page Top: Morning is breaking in Watertown, SD as Minneapolis & St. Louis train #13 ties up after covering the 223 miles from Minneapolis at the blazing average speed of 21 mph. It is August 1960 and the end of passenger service is at hand.

Below: The Caledonia Mississippi & Western was one of only five Minnesota narrow gauge lines. It built from Reno to Preston in 1879, and was acquired in 1880 by the Milwaukee Road. It was standard gauged in 1901 and lasted until 1977. Judging by the size of the train in this 1910 view at Canton, it must be a special movement or detour, because nothing this big ever traveled the line regularly.

Opposite Page Bottom: This postcard dated 1912 shows streetcars lined up on Nicollet Avenue, waiting for the Minneapolis Millers game to let out. They fanned out across the city to take the spectators home.







Above: This familiar view from the Linden Hills Blvd. bridge dates from about 1910. The retaining wall has not yet been built.

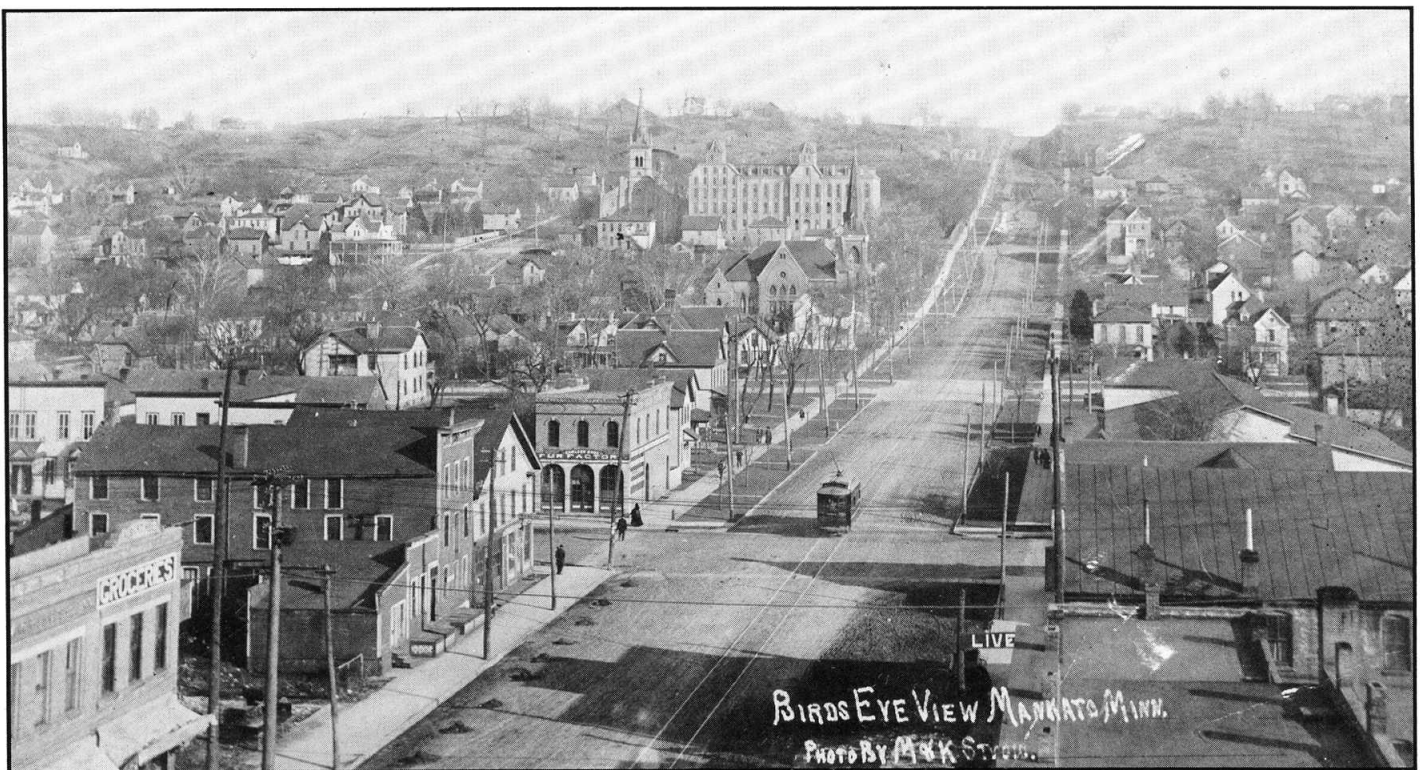
Below: The only classic wooden interurban cars in Minnesota ran on the St. Paul Southern. This card view postmarked 1924 shows the southern end of the line on 2nd St. in Hastings.





Above: The Mankato Electric Traction Co. lasted until 1930. It is shown here westbound on Front Street.

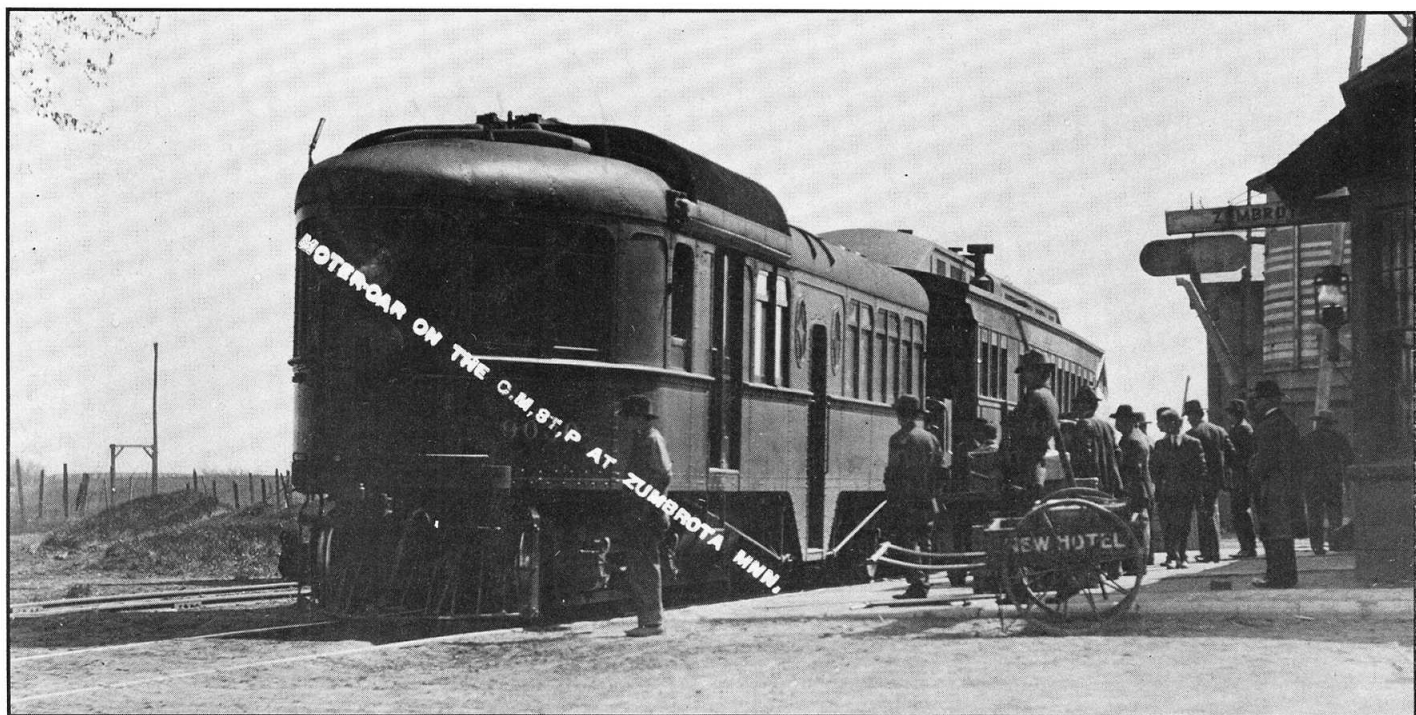
Below: This Mankato car is on Main Street ascending the "Hill" line.





Above: Here's a rare view. The Rochester & Northern Minnesota built from Rochester to Zumbrota in 1878 and became part of the C&NW in 1881. In 1903 the Chicago Great Western duplicated its route on the way to Red Wing. The R&NM lasted until 1933. This pastoral picture was taken in Zumbrota in 1910.

Below: Zumbrota's third railroad was the Milwaukee Road from Faribault to Wabasha. A GE gas electric tows an ancient wood coach into town in 1910.





Above: Open pit iron mining on the Cuyuna Range.

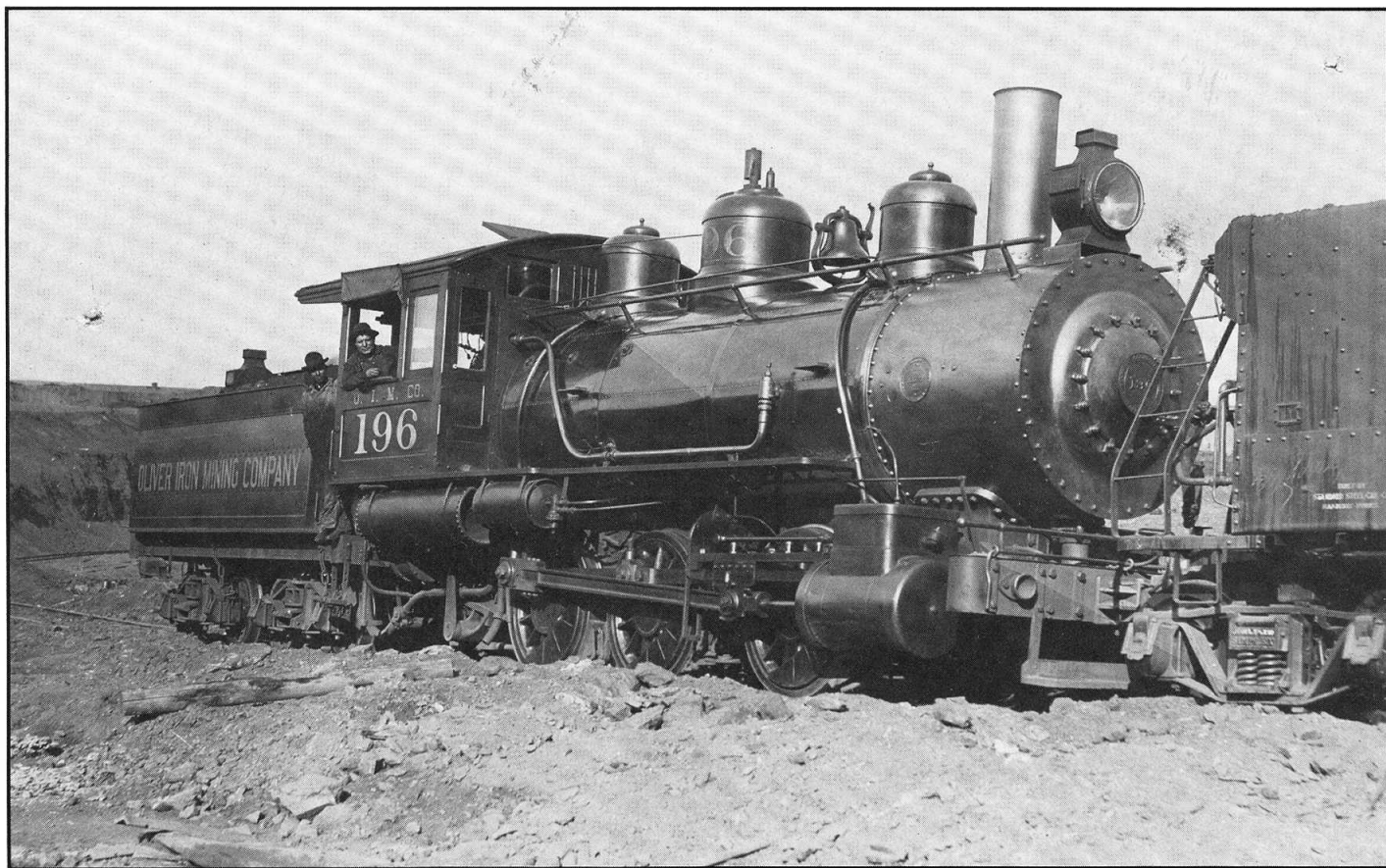
Below: Newly delivered DW&P RDC car D-301 at West Duluth on Aug. 9, 1958.





Above: Some kind of special occasion is underway in Ottertail on the Soo Line. The town has turned out with flags, a marching band and two hand-drawn fire rigs. This card is postmarked 1910.

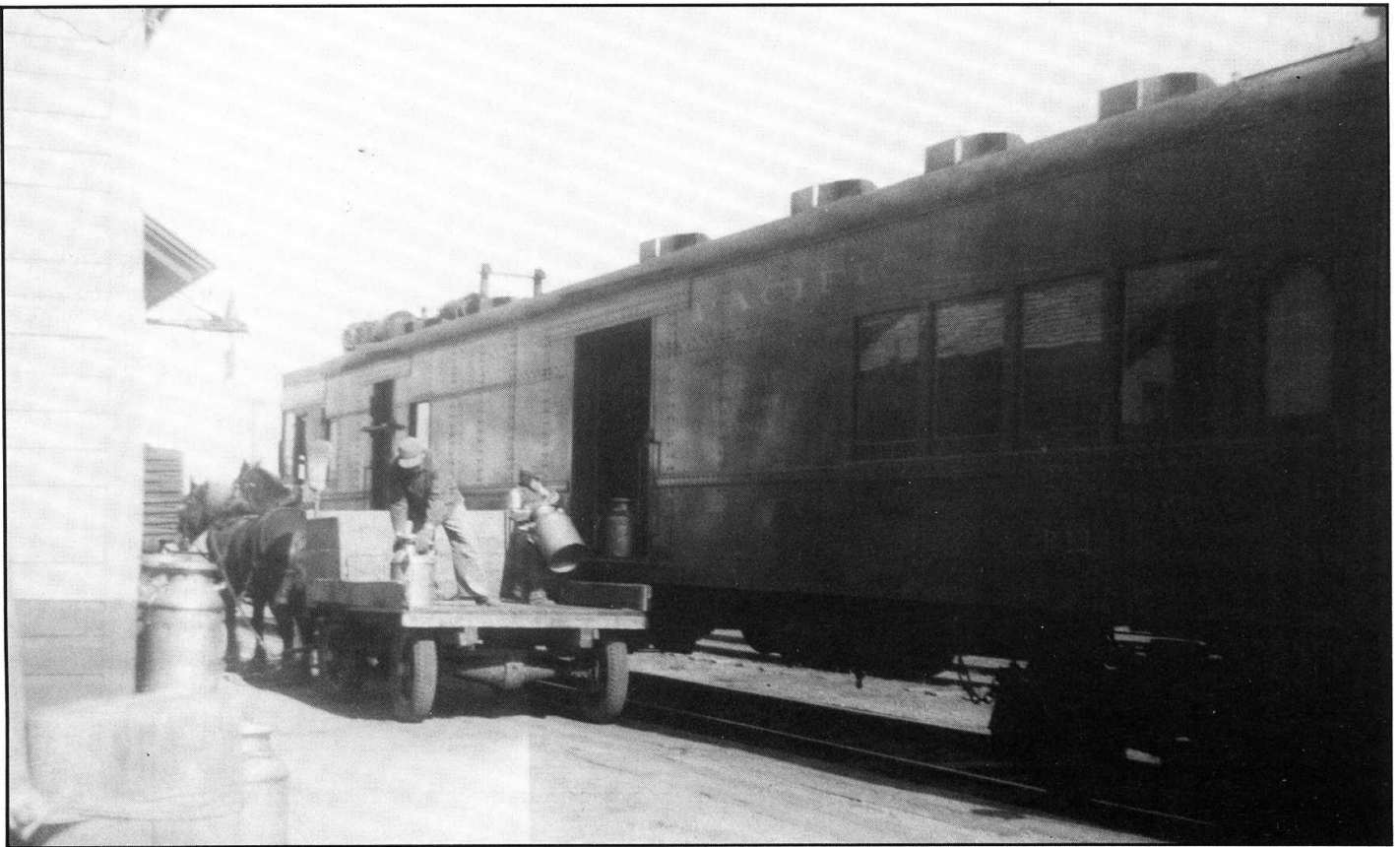
Below: Engine #196 of the Oliver Iron Mining Co. at work in an open pit on the range.





Above: A solid train of ice-cooled produce poses behind a grey/green - boilded ten wheeler.

Below: Now this is country railroading. The location is Pettibone, N.D. on the NP's Pingree - Wilton branch.





From Fair ground



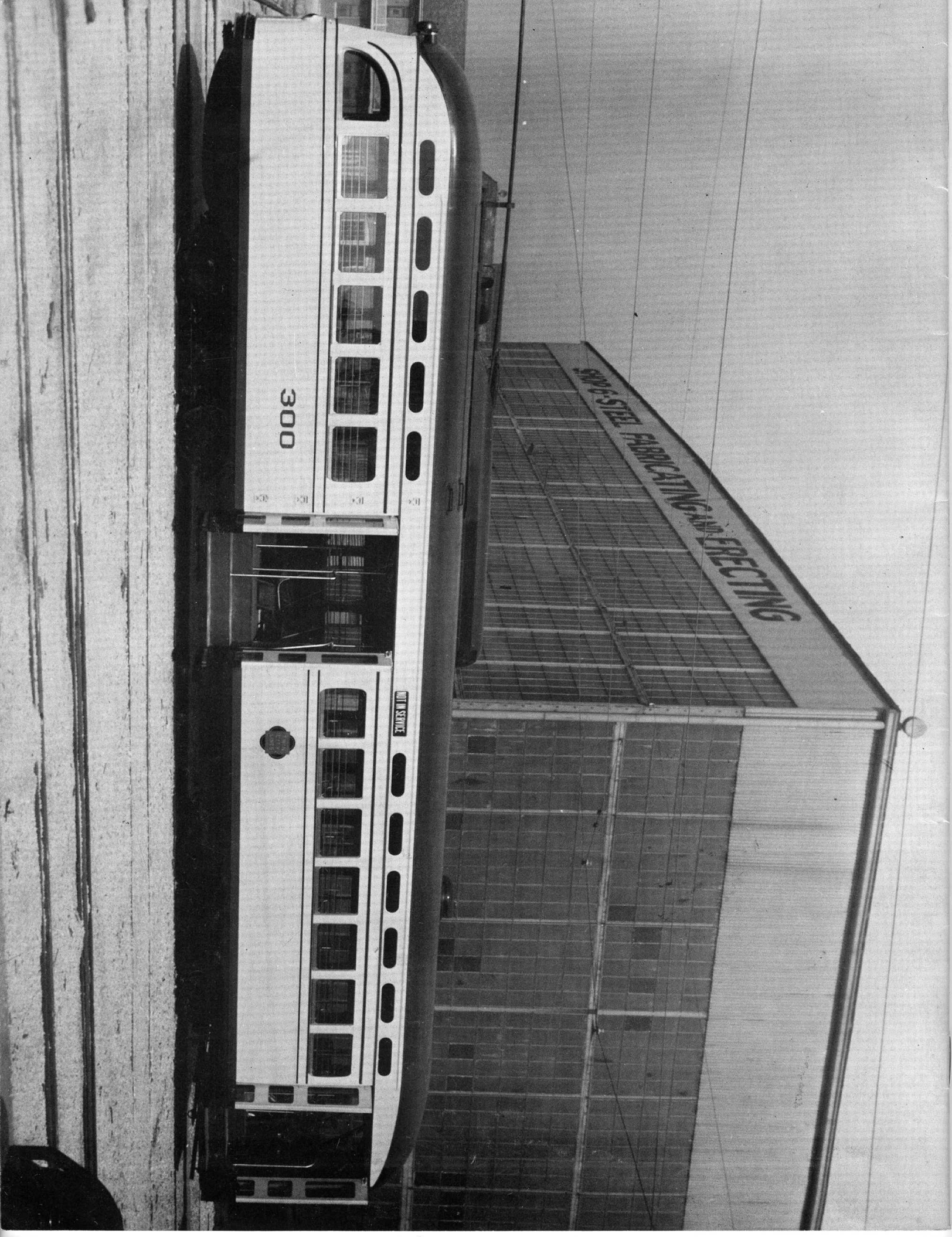
Top: The State Fair, when everyone arrived by trolley.

Bottom: Back in the post-war days when railroads actually promoted their passenger trains, the Great Northern fielded this entry in the Winter Carnival parade.

Inside rear cover: The modern, spartan front platform of TCRT PCC #300. Andrew Maginnis collection.

Rear cover: Spanking new PCC #300 at the St. Louis Car Co. Andrew Maginnis collection.





300

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August 2021

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